



United States  
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Forest  
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**Route To:**

**Date:** October 19, 2004

**Subject:** Proposed FY 05 Jarita Ranch Forest Health Project, El Rito Ranger District (elritord)

**To:** Forest Supervisor, Carson National Forest

On October 12, Dave Conklin of our staff met with Dave Lawrence (El Rito Ranger District) to examine an area planned for non-commercial thinning within the Agua/Caballos analysis area. The objective of this site visit was to determine if this area would be suitable for treatment under our insect and disease prevention/suppression program in FY 2005. The area is located in the southern end of the Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit, about three miles south of the community of Vallecitos.

The stands examined lie on both sides of the ridge just west of the Cañada del Puertecito. Stands on the west side of this ridge are predominantly ponderosa pine, with some piñon and rocky mountain juniper in the understories. Stands on the east side of the ridge are mostly pine, but have significant amounts of white fir and Douglas-fir. The understories were thinned to 6 to 8 foot spacing about 30 years ago; it appeared that no commercial logging has occurred here for at least 50 or 60 years. Stocking is quite variable, with mosaics of dense pole-size groups, mature forest, and more open areas.

Ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe infection is scattered throughout these stands, and of moderate intensity overall. More severe infection occurs near the ridge top, which we agreed to defer from the proposed treatment area. Bark beetles have caused a limited amount of tree mortality here over the past two to three years. We agreed that thinning these areas should reduce future losses to both dwarf mistletoe and bark beetles. Dave Lawrence has since delineated two separate units totaling 214 acres for inclusion in an FY 2005 prevention/suppression proposal.

In both units, trees up to 9" dbh would be thinned to an average 20 foot spacing, varying spacing to favor the better dominant and codominant stems. All moderately and heavily infected (DMR 3-6) trees would be cut regardless of spacing, while lightly infected (DMR 1-2) trees of good form and vigor greater than 5" dbh would be retained where needed. All visibly infected trees less than 5" dbh would be cut.

In Unit 1, located on the west side of the ridge, most of the piñon and juniper would be removed from the understories. In Unit 2, located on the east side of the ridge, ponderosa pine would be the preferred species for retention, but Douglas-fir and possibly some white fir would be left, especially within the mistletoe-infected portions.



We recommend that the thinning be conducted between mid-July and mid-December to minimize the potential for a build-up of *Ips* engraver beetles in the slash. Please contact us if you have questions about this evaluation or would like additional assistance with this project.

/s/ David A. Conklin (for)  
DEBRA ALLEN-REID  
New Mexico Zone Leader, Forest Health

cc: Diana M Trujillo, Leonard Lucero, David E Lawrence, Timothy Fruits, John Anhold